The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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BY WAY OF CRITICISM

NOW THAT the press has featured a particularly startling Nazi decree, there will doubtless be some general awakening of interest in a situation which has been acute for two and a half years. It must now be evident to even the incredulous that Hitlerism is a religion which draws strength from the act of protesting not against the Jews alone, but against the whole Semitic tradition of which Christianity is historically and theologically the culmination. The new "reformation" is not an attempt by dissidents to reconstitute the Church, but an effort by militant neo-pagan modernists to destroy the sources from which the Church arose.

We wish to make this fact serve as an introduction to some further comment on another problem of religious liberty with which Catholics have latterly been concerned. It is obvious that nobody will ever venture to accuse German Catholicism of blind addiction to a reactionary social order, to caste feeling, and to distrust of legitimate progress. The record of this Catholicism is one of tireless battling for liberties desired in a spirit of true and fruitful altruism. But all the faults named above and more are still currently attributed to the Church in Mexico. Even very decent people are strongly convinced, sometimes on the basis of evidence they have good reason to respect, that the tyranny of the State is at least partly justified south of the Rio Grande.

It cannot be our endeavor to whitewash the inside and outside of Mexican Catholicism. We think that not a few of its representatives were hermetically sealed against contact with the new and fruitful in modern endeavor. Living in a country afflicted with vivid racial and moral contrasts, they almost automatically saw much from a provincial rather than a Catholic viewpoint. In all this they differed not a whit from their surroundings, where corrupt politicians were doing

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lip service to half-baked and erroneous versions of the newer revolutionary ideologies. Our contention is, in essence, that the Church in Mexico was always demonstrably so superior to what was outside it that to see it in the proper perspective is to realize its ethical and spiritual greatness. We believe that Americans would almost unanimously endorse this contention were it not for the unfortunate prejudices aroused during the course of Protestant missionary effort in Latin America. The history of those prejudices is a long and tortuous one. No comment on it is intended here apart from the observation that it has had many and serious repercussions in the United States.

Accordingly the narrative of the recent Church-State conflicts is not easy to relate. It presupposes a masterly acquaintance with facts difficult to arrive at, and an objectivity which is a little above the level required for ordinary research. Still the narrative must be written. Nobody can remain indifferent to a matter which so deeply concerns all America. We therefore noted with interest the issue of a report on "Church and State in Mexico" by the Foreign Policy Association. This association has earned for itself a position of genuine leadership in the discussion of what is going on in other countries. Most of its literature ranks with the best that is being produced elsewhere, and there is every reason why the public should consider it as nearly authoritative as comment on necessarily involved and changing situations can be.

When we say, therefore, that the report on Mexico, written by Earle K. James, is eminently unsatisfactory, we do not wish to attribute any except honorable motives to the association or to insinuate even that Mr. James is a snake in the grass. The point is merely that somebody else should have written the document, and that the thing is amateurish and harmful as it stands. Having been interested editorially in the Mexican situation for years, we have had drummed into our ears scores of quite divergent points of view. We should not have minded greatly if Mr. James had gone off on a tangent of his own. But it does nobody any good—and it may do some people considerable harm—if writing which bears all the earmarks of research turns out to be just another hodgepodge.

In what follows we shall run a finger through the report, not in the hope of doing a thorough job but simply with the object of showing what sort of faults can be noted throughout. On page 1, we read that occasionally Protestants and Jews have joined Catholics in the attack on Mexican tyranny, "although Protestant churches generally have opposed anything resembling intervention by the United States." This statement sins three ways: first, it gives the impression that the Catholic Church *has* demanded intervention, when as a matter of fact all the public collective utterances of the hierarchy have expressly repudiated intervention; second, it does not give any indication of what some Protestant groups with missionary interests actually said and did; and third, it says not a word about the part which was played in the development of Mexican anticlericalism by intervention under Woodrow Wilson, which intervention was abetted by large and influential Protestant groups. The omission of the third point leaves out of the discussion one of its most important elements. Mexican Catholics would have adopted an entirely different policy if they had not felt that the United States could help to change a situation which had been produced by the United States.

On page 2 we are asked to credit a "history of the controversy" which badly misinterprets the theory under which the Church functioned in Mexico. For example, the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 had nothing to do with their "wealth." At that time a tide of feeling against the Society was rising on the ground that it had "international purposes" not compatible with "nationalism." The underlying motive was resentment of such facts as the Jesuit campaign against Jansenism and Gallicanism. Later on (page 115) it is stated that "the Church, which opposed Mexican independence, was long identified with reactionary elements." This bland assertion, which seems to repose for the most part on a hasty judgment by Walter Lippmann (who is a fine fellow but whose knowledge of Mexican history is probably rudimentary), is true only in a very limited sense. The Church, with a vast Indian problem on its hands, did at first repudiate the ideal of independence. Later on, convinced that the tide had definitely turned that way, it actually fomented the separation from Spain.

Just one other instance, taken from many. Mr. James concludes that the Church's opposition to the 1917 Constitution proved to "many Mexicans" that Catholicism was reactionary, and "as a result, anticlericalism has gone to extremes, exemplified by the fanatic excesses of the state of Tabasco." That, we think, is just so much Tabasco sauce. Somebody at the Foreign Policy Association must know better than that. The doors cannot have been closed to rumors of the death of Father Pro and his companions, and of numberless other outrages to which the Revolution had had recourse. Wherefore, though space prevents any extension of the catalog of weaknesses in this report, we shall close by wondering if the final message of good advice to the Church (page 116) ought not to have been preceded by more hard study and earnest reflection than Mr. James saw fit to attempt. With perseverance, even he ought to do better next time. But we protest against this present flimsy report.

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Week by Week

CONGRESS worried along through a maze of committee activities while powerful administration efforts to curb revolt were greatly in evidence. The new tax bill was not ready as soon as had been hoped for, but the House expected that an initial draft would be ready within a week. To the surprise of many, advocates of a cash bonus were active once again, and planning to append their pet hobby to the tax bill in the form of an amendment. It was also rumored that attempts would be made to liberalize farm and home financing. A great deal of time was spent developing the "revelations" made during the course of investigations into utility lobbying, and many believed that the White House would engineer another effort to test congressional sentiment on the holding company "death clause." All in all, enough material had been piled up for a session, and bets were being taken that the Capitol would remain wide open until November. Since no one knew precisely what was destined to be the result of all this cooking and stirring, the wish was repeated on all sides that the nation could be left unreformed momentarily. But the sober truth was this: so many laws were under consideration that it was hard to tell which was which, particularly when the thermometer jumped; and the likelihood was that even the task of completing the identification would take time.

The Trend of Events

THAT recent German governmental actions against Catholics, Jews, Protestants and conservatives embody no very new principle is a truism which we would not repeat were the public mind not so prone to forget the sequence of events abroad. Nevertheless these decrees and demonstrations mean that the waves of fanaticism are being whipped up—for a purpose. Whenever the Nazis get into a hole, either because of dissension within the party or by reason of dissatisfaction outside, the lion is turned loose to roar for a while. We believe that the major difficulty of the moment is economic. Dr. Schacht has legislated into being an extraordinary measure: German industries which supply goods for home consumption are to turn a year's profits over to the government in order to provide a subsidy for export industries. It is assumed that in this manner manufacturing costs can be reduced to a point where Germany can undersell the world and thus overcome the handicaps of foreign exchange and the boycott. Whatever else may be said about such a proposal, which "Russianizes" industry to an extent never before witnessed in the western world, it is obviously not palatable to many inside Germany. Those engaged in export trade are naturally more moderate and "liberal" than are business men with no foreign contacts and able to make handsome profits out of their dealings with the government. With a stroke of the pen, many an enterprise which turned Nazi for opportunistic reasons has been put on bread and water for twelve months. One may therefore assume that there is considerable of a revolt against the conservative economics of Dr. Schacht, and that things are pretty warm inside the Nazi ranks.

The German Situation

WHAT could be more diverting than a little display of "radical" strength? There is a minor pogrom along café row in Berlin, and a great hulabaloo is raised over a few love affairs between Jews—i. e., mostly persons with a Semitic grandmother. In Cologne the cathedral is packed with young people attending a special service, while an overflow crowd stands in the square outside. Suddenly a mob of Hitlerjugend swoops down and begins to attack the group in the square. The police gently push the attackers to one side. And thus the story proceeds for hours: some come out of the church, to meet the onrush of sticks and fists; the police intervene; others leave the church, and the same things happens. This Ku-Klux-Klanism on a vast and horrible scale has the great virtue of diverting the mob. With a crowd like that behind them, the Nazi chieftains can scare anybody in the country. Then gradually the panic and frenzy subside, moderate influence has a chance once again, and the turbulence calms down. Such is the rhythm of life in Germany. But it can't go on that way forever. Some day—but sufficient unto that day will be the evil thereof.

Business and Employment

THE WIDELY predicted improvement in business has been holding up remarkably right through the hot months when there is usually a seasonal decline. There are some reasons to hope that this may be the beginning of a general improvement in private enterprise which is so much to be desired and that business will begin to reabsorb some of the millions now unemployed. Steel production has steadily advanced. The purchase of passenger automobiles during the first five months of this year was 53 percent ahead of a year ago. One of the largest automobile companies reports that it has doubled its income for the first half of this year. The stock market, after a climb sustained over three months, has at the moment of writing reached the highest point since its leveling off two years ago from its former precipitate decline. Retail business is generally better, one of the

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large mail order houses, for instance, reporting an improvement of 40 percent in sales for the four weeks ending in the middle of July over the preceding period and that dollar sales were the largest for any similar period since 1929. Building and the sales and production of durable goods have also shown a moderate improvement. All of these things would be most encouraging, if it were not for the fact that employment seems, if anything, to be falling off and the necessity for and the burden of relief to be steadily increasing. The investigating forces of the skeletonized NRA report that since the attempted code regulations of hours and wages were knocked out by the Supreme Court NRA decision, there has been a lengthening of hours in many plants and reduction in weekly wages and in the number of employees. If the latter trend continues, it will surely wreck the other and bring with it an increase in the attempts to solve the problems of the depression by politics. The race is critical and it is devoutly to be hoped that improving business will begin to improve the opportunities of many who must earn their livelihood.

All the Qualifications

WE NOMINATE for the position of Der Fuehrer of these United States the Honorable Poultney Bigelow, once skipper of the Rob Roy and latterly annual pilgrim to Doorn. The following passages are taken, without further ado, from his essay in the current *Nineteenth Century and After,* on "England and America": "Let me first explain why we differ in language. It is the climate that is largely to blame: we have not the soft winters that permit cows and sheep to browse the whole year on luscious grass. . . . Those two early centuries of New England made the Golden Age of my ancestors. We were more purely English than England herself; we of Suffolk were wholly of Norman or Nordic or Anglo-Saxon descent. A Jew or a Catholic was a curiosity, as might be a lama of Tibet or a hadji from Arabia today. The Civil War closed that happy period by crushing the southern half of our country and turning loose the now helpless and leaderless African slaves. . . . The cry of the moneyed class was for cheap labor, and that meant Catholics from Canada, Ireland, Hungary, Bohemia—factory fodder. . . . War between England and America is absurd, beyond even the power of the Sinn Fein Irish to bring about. Our press, which is almost wholly under alien or Jewish influence, makes much of trifling incidents, but the great mass of reasoning people scout such efforts. How begin a war? How intern the Americans in Canada or the Canadians in the States? How deal with English settled and married in the western world?"

An Irreplaceable Voice

ONLY a limited group, as the reading public now goes, will be conscious of the loss to the world of fine fiction brought about by the death of Anne Douglas Sedgwick. Yet those few will feel the loss acutely. She was American by birth and training; and her novels align themselves with those pictures of manners we associate with Mrs. Wharton and Henry James. Yet there is a difference. Her canvases are smaller than those of James, but her studies in international contrast are fully as penetrating as his; and she wrote with a limpid charm, an absence of the dry, ironic note common to him and Mrs. Wharton, and much more human closeness to her characters and active good-will for them. Truth to tell, she was not an ironist at all in major intention, though she etched some powerful, acid portraits. She was purely a student of character; its growths, the impacts upon it of outside forces, its possibilities of self-delusion and self-purification, above all its natural attraction to integrity and goodness, fascinated her endlessly. This very thing, her chief strength, is perhaps what prompts the near-sighted reproach that she was unable to cope with the profound changes of the present. She was simply not interested in them, at any rate in comparison with those realities she instinctively believed to be permanent; and these go far in her novels to compensate for the absence of the more robust note.

Good Words and True

A NOTABLE contribution to straight thinking is James Weldon Johnson's "Communism and the Negro," in the *Herald Tribune's* current Sunday magazine. It presents a detailed and careful examination of the plight of the Negro in the present turmoil, with that temperateness of tone and unresentful objectivity which are among the most remarkable characteristics of the superior Negro, and points out that, while social and economic reforms of some sort are inevitable under our prevailing dispensation, the proletarian revolution exists nowhere; not even, except as a distant promise, in Russia. But Mr. Johnson has an even deeper difference with Communists than the contrast between the limitless confidence of the assertions with which they overwhelm the helpless Negro, and the slightness of their actual achievements. Granting to the economic factor all its tremendous importance, he yet repudiates the artificial simplicity by which the orthodox Marxist defines the Negro's problem as simply economic. Like Dickens in his discussion of American slavery, Mr. Johnson discerns that there were other factors than the economic involved, and that sometimes their indulgence actually runs counter to the economic advantage of the indulgers.

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THE HORNS OF DILEMMA

By PAUL SEVERANCE

Nothing attempted by the government has the charm of T. V. A.—that experiment in the production and sale of cheap power which now makes the Tennessee Valley think of days when manna fell from heaven. Mr. Severance writes an effective close-up of what has been happening. The full meaning of "cheap electric current" cannot be grasped in a day or even in a generation. But one who fails to grasp at least a little of it is missing one of the really fascinating contemporary scenes.—The Editors.

EVERYBODY in Tennessee is talking about the Valley. Three to one, sixteen to one—such are the referendum quotas favoring the T. V. A. where public sentiment has expressed itself by ballot. Fringing south into Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, the same sentiment prevails. Up to July 1 more than 350 communities had applied to receive their shares of Mr. Roosevelt's "yardstick" power—and they want it quick!

This isn't difficult to understand. Take any section of the country and propose to spend $280,000,000 within its borders; build towering dams, spic model towns, electrify the farms, replant the squandered forests, check floods, cut power rates to less than half—and Diogenes's little mission with a lantern becomes a simple quest compared to that of finding a dissenting voice to mock the giver of such manna.

Still it does exist. Even in this Valley one finds at intervals a stray Republican who lifts his jaundiced eyes to heaven at the merest mention of the T. V. A. He runs a temperature and shouts pet phrases such as "Government in business!", "Utopian! Socialistic! Red!"—but they have all gone limp and lost their crackle. This dwindling army of dissenters is recruited largely from the fields of the utilities; employees and stockholders in the various power companies. They number several thousand. Yet their ranks grow thin. To be offered by the government a cool $96 a share for stock that is quoted on the open market at less than $20, takes the edge off one's belligerence. Some carry on in the name of loyalty; and if you will dig into hidden corners, look under leaves and into cracks in masonry you may even find a rare museum specimen of a Right-wing Democrat. He will blink at you when the sunlight falls upon him and begin to croak lugubriously, "Who's going to pay? Who's going to pay?"—which is obviously absurd!

Emotional reactions that indorse or challenge this T. V. A. adventure essentially are most acute within the limits of the Valley. But the boldness of the program, the probability of its extension, and the millions of invested capital that it threatens give the plan first rank as an issue of national importance. Linked closely with the spectacular assault on power holding companies, and with a dozen other channels of possible expansion, this T. V. A. is saint or devil according to one's point of view.

But for those who would observe the progress in the Valley without emotional distortion perhaps the most revealing evidence will be found in unforeseen developments which the partizan would overlook. A case in point is the seeming paradox of T. V. A. with its own arch enemy, the power companies within the Valley, working hand-in-hand to achieve the most spectacular sales campaign in the history of electrical appliances. That the recent utility convention in Atlantic City should award its prize for outstanding business growth and record-breaking appliance sales to the Tennessee Electric Power Company is within itself significant and flatly contradictory to the echoing clamor that opposes reductions in power rates. For the first step in the Valley was to drive rates downward, both through the establishment of T. V. A. supply and through reflected influence upon the various power companies. On the estimate of Chairman Frank McNinch, of the Federal Power Commission, utility rate cuts within the area of the T.V.A. alone save consumers annually more than $16,000,000, and outside the Valley it is saving power users $15,000,000 more.

The avowed position of the power companies in regard to cheap electric current is that low rates are a consummation devoutly to be wished but to be attained by gradual readjustments that impose no shock upon the sensitive nervous temperament of Lady Profits. The T. V. A., like a sunrise dancer, would leap hilariously to this conclusion, insisting that the response to drastic rate cuts will spurt consumption to a volume that will immediately take up the slack.

The first swift move by T. V. A. to support this theory was to induce the manufacturers of electrical appliances to produce great quantities of attractive models in stoves, refrigerators, water heaters and other tempting gadgets that send the electric meter spinning and that can be sold so cheap that the poor can buy them. This spread a tempting dish before the Valley: cheap power and low-cost appliances. It was made still more palatable by the federal plan of E. H. F. A., designed to finance sales through appliance deal-

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ers and extend instalment payments over three long years. The utilities had no yen to join this game. But they had cut their rates and they needed "load" to justify these rate reductions. There were profits, too, to be gleaned in selling these appliances and cashing in on the effervescence of an acutely electricity-conscious Valley.

There was a temporary lull. The independent dealers, outside the utility circles, were slow to play their cards. They haggled over profit margins, shied, balked, sent their delegations to T. V. A. headquarters. Wall Street was tugging at its leash—and suddenly sailed in! Demand took the hook like a playful tarpon and set out to sea. Not only white but colored "prospects" became acutely susceptible to the lure of electrical conveniences—and had there been any Indians left in this fertile Valley it is highly probable they would all have been swapping wampum for electric fans and no tepee would be considered modern without at least its own three-minute toaster.

So on the horns of this dilemma it may become the destiny of these stanch utilities to prove for T. V. A. the cardinal facts which the power industry has been so busily refuting. This is that private-owned utilities themselves can bridge the dangerous gap between high and low rates without inevitable disaster. This recognition may bring a truce and stop the fight that otherwise must lead to the annihilation of the private power interests or the ultimate collapse of T. V. A.

Let us glance at some figures. For the purpose of this illustration it would be sufficient to confine ourselves to the facts set forth in recent statements contained in the annual reports of any one of the three big power companies in the Valley. The position of the Tennessee Electric is most striking. This company serves 420 communities. It is itself a holding company by virtue of the coincidence of its interstate operations. Its opposition to the T. V. A. has been intensive. It is held, in turn, as are the Alabama and the Georgia power companies, by Commonwealth and Southern, of which the indefatigable Wendell Willkie, conspicuous for his public broadsides against federal operation and for his White House conferences, is the guiding head.

Through 1934 this Tennessee company showed a greater percentage of increase in residential power consumption than any utility in the United States. It stood first in the sale of electric ranges, second in the sale of electrical refrigerators, third in water heaters. Its total sales of electrical appliances for the year reached three times the volume of 1933. The increased consumption of electric energy, with very little renewal of activity in the industrial field, totaled almost 95,000,000 kilowatt-hours. This advanced the average residential consumption to 775 kilowatt-hours a year. This means a gain of 26 percent and is just over the halfway mark toward the goal of 1,500 which the government contends every family should use and will use as soon as power is cheap enough.

With this increased consumption the Tennessee Electric gave its domestic power users rate reductions from an average of 5.77 cents to 4.13. This brought the local average under the present national average set at 5.3. It still does not compare with "yardstick" rates which the T. V. A. proposes to instal which would start, for residental use, at 3 cents a kilowatt, scale down to 2, then 1, and then—4 mills where heating or air conditioning appliances are made use of.

But has the Tennessee Electric made or lost as a result of this moderate rate cut and the responding increase in the volume of power used?

One year, to begin with, is not long enough for an accurate test. Refrigerators sold in the sales drive last November spun their meters only two months in the twelve. Yet gross revenue for this company showed an increase of nearly $1,000,000 above the gross for the previous year. Operating expenses advanced approximately 20 percent. The net, after all this stir and record-breaking appliance sales, was $54,201.23 short of the net for the year before. The net earnings for the year 1934 stand at nearly $6,000,000. This, in the face of what most of us still look upon as a severe depression and despite the most drastic rate reductions in the history of the company. This reduction in net earnings must also be considered in the light of various contributing factors. There was an essential increase in personnel and in advertising outlay to secure the volume of new business. There was an added burden of shorter hours and advanced wage scales to conform to NRA code regulations. Taxes paid by the company were stepped up nearly $300,000—four times the reduction in net earnings. There were also sharp advances in the costs of material supplies.

Alabama Power, to touch the high spots, showed an increase in residential consumption of more than 10,000,000 kilowatt-hours. This is 19.5 percent above this company's record for 1933. Alabama also showed a substantial increase in operating costs. Taxes advanced some $80,000. Industrial consumption actually fell off more than 4 percent. Sales of electrical appliances doubled those of the previous year. The average residential rate in Alabama is 3.84. This is lower than the average in Tennessee—which is grist to the mill of T.V.A. as the average family in Alabama used 100 more kilowatt-hours in the run of the year than did Mr. and Mrs. Average Family across the border where rates are higher.

In Georgia results are much the same with minor variations. The significant feature is that this downward trend in rates, which was con-

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tested bitterly by the power industry and hailed as a dire calamity, seems to be opening the gates to expanding profits. Through the year 1935 all these appliances that were sold in 1934 will be grinding merrily—and appliance sales continue to expand. This is furnishing cold evidence that as rates go down there is an immediate response in increased consumption which gives net results that need not bankrupt the utilities as has been their claim. While such results have been proved in Tupelo and in other communities receiving T. V. A. power and distributing it over municipally owned lines, to establish this contention with the figures of utility reports is quite another matter.

One other point of difference between T. V. A. and the utility attitudes toward rate reductions is that the T. V. A. schedule is designed primarly to benefit the home consumer. If operation costs do not justify this schedule, it is the federal plan to impose a surcharge upon industry to make up the loss. This, power companies insist, will penalize manufactories unfairly. "But there'll be no need for a surcharge," contends T. V. A. "Our rates are ample to meet all expense. The provision for a surcharge is just in case—" "Bologna!" comes the answer. "Political soothing syrup for a gullible proletariat! Serve the factories first—then they can give men work!" Which sounds like a ten-strike until the T. V. A. shows that with rare exceptions power charges are almost negligible in production costs.

Withal there is a general optimism in the Valley. The utilities are in no sense giving up their fight but the trend, despite the inclination to discredit its advantages, is most encouraging. Next year's utility reports will be still more interesting. Meanwhile the T. V. A., like Mr. Morgan's midget, must sit precariously upon the lap of Fate. So conspicuous a posture might not be disconcerting were it not for the torturing consciousness that Fate herself is but a strumpet whose favor rests upon the fickle whim of the god of Chance.

This old world has a way of working out its problems so that yesterday's agnostic becomes today's devout believer and tomorrow's stanch conservative. The vision of the T.V.A. may mirage Utopia, but these halo hander-outers have improvised a lilting melody and this song now rises from the Valley to extol the beauties of the coming day. To some this buoyant litany is apparently convincing. To others, possibly a dirge. But so long as the power companies continue to prove the soundness of the T. V. A. contentions, it begins to look as though the breaks were right for Old Man Consumer and that cheap electric current had come in to stay.

WHEN THE PIE WAS OPENED

By THEODORE MAYNARD

FOR SOME time in England there has been what might be described as a slump in poetry. Not that poetry has had for a long while any very great height of prosperity from which it could slip. It was only that twenty years ago a number of men were attracting a good deal of attention for their work; ten years ago they were still writing well; and then, all of a sudden, silence fell. Alice Meynell died; Hardy died; Housman announced in the very title of "Last Poems" that he would write no more; Bridges crowned his career with "The Testament of Beauty" and died. Walter de la Mare and W. H. Davies, and with them many others, either ceased to produce or showed signs of imminent exhaustion.

Of course there was in this nothing very remarkable. Poets die, like other people, and, much more frequently than other people, run dry. The remarkable thing is that nobody came to take their places. W. B. Yeats was almost alone in showing a power to keep going and to improve as he grew older. The country as a whole took the meager poetic output calmly. But in literary circles there was some anxiety, some scanning of the horizon. So when a group of young poets put in an appearance they were received with perhaps more adulation than they deserved—certainly more than they would have received a few years earlier. There is now a poetic boom because of C. Day Lewis, W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender.

All three are men in their twenties; around them are grouped several other young poets, animated by similar ideas and using much the same technique. They dedicate books to one another, and introduce one another's names in their poems, and show an admirable *esprit de corps*. Day Lewis has written a somewhat lengthy explanation of their purpose in "A Hope for Poetry."

In doing this he could hardly escape a touch of solemnity. But upon the whole he accomplished his task with tact and good sense and good humor. He must have understood that he was running the danger of taking himself and his friends absurdly seriously, but though one may disagree with much that he has to say—as, for instance, his judgment that "Auden more than any other young writer has the essential qualifications of a major poet"—it must be admitted that "A Hope

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for Poetry" is an acute, and even brilliant, bit of critical exposition. He deprecates the idea of there being any "boom" in poetry, but makes it clear that his group will have to be reckoned with.

Their literary ancestors, he tells us, are T. S. Eliot, Wilfrid Owen and Gerard Manley Hopkins. He pays his respects to the "triumph of personality" in the work of Hardy, to the accomplished craftsmanship of De la Mare, and he has this to say of Yeats: "The last in the aristocratic tradition of poets, remains the most admired of living writers: none of us can touch his later work, and it is too personal in idiom, too insulated, to allow an easy communication of its powers." But, as Mary Colum pointed out in an article in the *Forum* for June, Day Lewis has borrowed a great deal from Yeats, even including his mannerisms. Something too is owed to D. H. Lawrence—as is acknowledged by them—though this does not seem much more than a stirring or shaking up; and something is owed to Emily Dickinson, which is not acknowledged at all.

They are like Eliot to the extent that much of their work—especially Auden's—is a tissue of literary reminiscence, adroitly strung together. But they are now inclined to look at Eliot a little askance, since he announced his Anglo-Catholicism. The influence of Owen they are very anxious to stress, but, in my opinion, they exaggerate Owen's importance. Had Owen lived he probably would have accomplished remarkable things. In the few poems he left us he struck a note of austere pity; but his main interest, it seems to me, lies in his technique. Not that he was a technical revolutionary, but by using assonance instead of rhyme he provided a method which could be further extended, and has been rather fully exploited by the new group.

The fierce astringency of Father Hopkins is not something that can be taken up at will. But it is, of course, possible to imitate his technique—possible, but hardly advisable. These poets are far more easily read than Hopkins was, except in a few of his pieces. They are wise in avoiding his eccentric split rhymes.

> But what black Boreas *wrecked her? he*
> *C*ame equipped, deadly- *electric* . . .
>
> But his eye no cliff, no *coast or*
> *M*ark makes in the rivelling *snowstorm.*

There is nothing like that here. But Auden injudiciously repeats Hopkins's internal rhyming in

> Breaking like surf on turf on road and roof,

and Hopkins's combination of alliteration and half-rhyming in

> Me, March, you do with your movements master and rock
> With wing-whirl, whale-wallow, silent budding of cell.

If Hopkins was only too often extremely obscure, Auden at times completely outdoes him in incomprehensibility. With a little effort I can as a rule extract from the Jesuit poet his difficult meaning. But I must confess that much of "Paid on Both Sides," "The Orators" and "The Dance of Death" surrenders to me no meaning whatever. Day Lewis explains that these are satires, and admits that Auden's work "is scarcely recognizable as such by those accustomed to thinking of satire in terms of Juvenal, Dryden or Pope." But I still remain unenlightened. I had always supposed that satire (of all literary forms) failed completely when it was not completely intelligible. So I must conclude that this satire is compounded of an esoteric ideology and a set of family jokes for the purpose of dumbfoundering all those who do not belong to the sacred circle of the initiate. Apart from these cases, the work of the group—though rarely easy reading—can generally be understood without too great a strain. When Auden writes, for example,

> Nights come bringing the snow, and the dead howl
> Under the headlands in their windy dwelling
> Because the Adversary put too easy questions
> On lonely roads—

all except those who insist on poetic pap can understand and must applaud.

All the members of the group profess to be Communists. I have wondered at times whether their revolutionary political ideas have not been (of course unconsciously) used to dispense them from the necessity of being technical revolutionaries. Their forms are exceedingly strict, and (except for the rhyming devices borrowed from Hopkins, Emily Dickinson and Wilfrid Owen) their main departure from the classical mode is in their use of Hopkins's "sprung rhythm." I cite two examples:

> More beautiful and soft than any moth
> With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path
> Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines
> Glides over suburbs and the sleeves set trailing tall
> To point the wind. Gently, broadly, she falls
> Scarcely disturbing charted currents of air.
>
> (Spender)

> What can we say of these, from the womb wasted,
> Whose nerve was never tested in act, who fell at
> the start,
> Who had no beauty to lose, born out of season?
>
> Early an iron frost clamped down their flowing
> Desires. They were lost at once: they failed and
> died in the whirling
> Snow, bewildered, homeless from first to last.
>
> (Day Lewis)

Communism, I suppose, is implied there. If so, it is of a variety that most non-Communists

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can sympathize with. These young men's political views seem largely to be conditioned by their natural impatience with the over-extolled virtues of the British ruling class. The Communism of the group is much more clearly expressed in a poem by McDiarmid on Lenin quoted in "A Hope for Poetry."

With Auden, Spender and Day Lewis, however, Communism hardly becomes more definite than the Shelleyan aspiration, "The world's great age begins anew," though Spender in his "Vienna" expresses indignation over the suppression of the Socialist revolution. In this poem, which just misses being a really powerful one only because Spender did not confine himself to straight narrative, the issue is confused; and sometimes we have inflicted on us (which is not often Spender's way) gratuitous difficulties. The poet would seem to have written with a double mind, afraid to tell his story in forthright fashion, afraid of being too obviously a propagandist, and therefore failing to reach the simplicity without which such things are nothing.

I do not object to a poet being a propagandist—even a propagandist of Communism—so long as he remains a poet. These men succeed in remaining poets only because their Communism (except for Spender's "Vienna") is distilled and redistilled to an essence which is common to all passionate hearts brooding upon justice throned and crowned on earth—the Kingdom of God. Such a concept is—it need hardly be pointed out—religious at bottom. Despite Spender's line,

> Religion stands, the church blocking the sun,

his Communism, like Day Lewis's and Auden's is (after all the dross has been strained off) religious and, therefore, poetic. It would not surprise me if all three men ended up as Catholics; on the contrary it would surprise me if they didn't. I am going to quote a few lines from each of the three.

> Look there! The sunk road winding
> To the fortified farm.
> Listen! The cock's alarm
> In the strange valley.
>
> Are we the stubborn athletes;
> Are we then to begin
> The run between the gin
> And bloody falcon?
>
> The horns of the dark squadron
> Converging to attack;
> The sound behind our back
> Of glaciers calving.
>
> (Auden)

> Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields
> See how these names are fêted by the waving grass
> And by the streamers of white cloud
> And whispers of wind in the listening sky.
> The names of those who in their lives fought for life
> Who wore at their hearts the fire's center.
> Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun,
> And left the vivid air signed with their honor.
>
> (Spender)

> Oh keep the sickle sharp
> And follow still the plough:
> Others may reap, though some
> See not the winter through.
>
> Father, Who endest all,
> Pity our broken sleep;
> For we lie down with tears
> And waken but to weep.
>
> And if our blood alone
> Will melt this iron earth,
> Take it. It is well spent
> Easing a Saviour's birth.
>
> (Day Lewis)

These are not the best lines of any of these three poets; but—as so often happens—the second- or even the third-best offer more illumination than the best. It is interesting to note that each of these men has been most deeply influenced by poets of a religious spirit—by Yeats, with his eclectic theosophy; by D. H. Lawrence, that strange genius who escaped from an upbringing of provincial nonconformity to seek God in his own strange way; by T. S. Eliot, the Middle-Western Unitarian who is now an Anglo-Catholic; by Wilfrid Owen, who died too young to count in this connection, and who discovered no more than human loving kindness; and (most of all) by Gerard Manley Hopkins. So far the influence of the Jesuit poet has been merely technical. But it may come about that all the members of this group will eventually discover the significance of Hopkins's poetic content. If that ever happens, they will not find any very deep gulf fixed between Communism and Catholicism.

The Inevitable

The hands have learned a cunning of their own;
The feet have found a path that takes them far;
The eyes have followed, seeing all alone
A boyish vision of some guiding star.
Though just ten candles mark his years' short span,
My arms are empty now—my boy's a man.

BESS STOUT LAMBERT.

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ETERNAL REVOLUTION

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON

"IF ANY gentleman in this car," cried Artemus Ward, "has a crisis concealed on his person, I call on him to projuce it!" "But," observed a New York *Sun* editorial forty-odd years later, "the crisis remains unprojuced. It impends."

It seems to be a law of human nature that the social revolution must always impend—and that one generation after another should not only descry the immediacy of its arrival, but should publish the great news in the very same words as those used by the generations preceding it.

In 1934, an extremely good book was published, entitled "Rebel America." It was a most excellent history of social reform movements in the United States in the last hundred and ten years, by Lillian Symes. Miss Symes is herself a revolutionist, and has some slight claim to be counted as one of the cause's martyrs, having once been arrested by the capitalistic police in some clash between those minions and what Mr. Devery, in one of his inspired moments, called "the downtrod." She has balance, humor and wisdom; and she is amused by the way in which, throughout that century, her fellow reformers, even the greatest of them, saw the revolution coming next year, or this year, or next week. She records these unfulfilled prophecies with a twinkle. And yet, being herself a revolutionist, she has no more doubt than had the Fourierist Socialists a century ago that the revolution is about to arrive—even that it has arrived and that we are in the first stages of it. She writes of "the Revolution," and has no manner of doubt that Fourierism, Henry George's single tax movement, the free love furor of the 1830's and 1860's, the Molly Maguires, and even such seemingly unrelated occurrences as the Draft Riots in the Civil War, were all parts of the one great whole now unfolding before our eyes. Verily, it is a law of human nature: be a revolutionist, and immediately this vision is and always must be granted unto you.

Forty or fifty years ago the vision thrilled Francis W. L. Adams, an Australian poet visiting England. He heard some working girls singing a song he liked, for "its threat to the robber rich, the proud, the respectable free," and he called out to them (so he says in his poem),

> Girls, that's the shout, the shout we shall utter
> When, with rifles and spades,
> We stand, with the old Red Flag a-flutter,
> On the barricades!

He was sure, you see, that, as twentieth-century slang has it, "it won't be long now." There were no special signs of the imminence of those barricades at that time; but at the end of the 1870's there had been, and John Boyle O'Reilly expected the revolution along almost before he could get his poem "From the Earth, a Cry" into type. He listed the omens at the head of the poem, and the list is too long to reprint within the confined limits of this article; but you may get some idea how inescapably the crisis impended to O'Reilly in 1879 from these extracts:

> The Paris Commune.—Socialists attempt to kill the Emperor of Germany.—Internationalists fire at the King of Italy.—The farmers of Ireland rebel in despair against rack-rents.—The Pittsburgh Riots.—The American Strikes.—One English Viceroy in India murdered; another shot at.

And O'Reilly's poem exultantly hailed the revolution's immediate advent:

> Lightning! The air is split, the crater bursts,
> and the breathing
> Of those below is the fume and fire of hatred. . . .
>
> Landlords and Lawlords and Tradelords, the
> specters you conjured have risen—
> Communists, Socialists, Nihilists, Rent-rebels,
> Strikers, behold!

It did look like it, in the decade of the Paris Commune and the Pittsburgh strike. But the crisis remained unprojuced, as it had thirty years earlier, when Charles Mackay proclaimed:

> Lo! a cloud's about to vanish
> From the day;
> And a brazen wrong to crumble
> Into clay.
> Lo! the right's about to conquer—
> *Clear the way!*

Gerald Massey had seen the vision, too, in the middle of the nineteenth century:

> Victory! Victory! Tyrants are quaking!
> The Titan of Toil from the bloody thrall starts;
> The slaves are awaking, the dawn-light is breaking,
> The foot-fall of Freedom beats quick at our hearts!

The dawn-light always *is* breaking; it always will. In 1934, George Soule wrote a book en-

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titled "The Coming American Revolution." The word "coming" seems to imply a faint heart, with regard to a revolution already accomplished or partly accomplished; for that is what it had seemed to Ernest K. Lindley some months earlier. Mr. Lindley's book was entitled "The Roosevelt Revolution: First Phase," and recounted the first steps in the revolution, which to his mind was not "coming" but had already come. Apparently, however, some slight doubts were infused into Mr. Lindley's mind by a lady who makes a distinction between history and prophecy; for his dedication was:

> To B. G. L.
> Who Doesn't Think the Roosevelt Revolution Is a Real Revolution Yet. (And She May Be Right.)

Most of the crisis-seers, however, have no B. G. L. to stand, like the slave stood in the Roman chariot, and whisper a deterrent caution in their ears.

But Soule was his own B. G. L., and this is probably a unique case among crisis-gazers. He believes thoroughly in a coming revolution; but he figures its arrival at a generation or two hence, perhaps many generations. He thinks it is sure because capitalism is an inefficient tool; but he does not think much better of Socialism and thinks worse of Communism and Fascism. The star-eyed see imminent revolution (as O'Reilly saw it in the strikes of 1877 and the Commune of 1871 and the Land League) in the collapse of capitalism since 1929. But Soule coldly points out that capitalism is always collapsing without bringing revolution one step nearer. He lists everything that happened since the crash of 1929 and says:

> There is not one of these phenomena which has not occurred in previous depressions.

However, it may be thought that the Mackays and Masseys and O'Reillys and Adamses and Symeses are of the lesser revolutionary ranks; and that the great leaders merely tolerated their ebullient enthusiasms, looking down on them with an indulgent smile and, out of their superior wisdom, knowing better. The great reformers must have had clearer sight than these vision-given lieutenants. It might be so if it were not for what I have already pointed out: that this revolutionary imminence, this constant impending of the unprojuced and unprojuceable crisis, is a state of mind; is a law of human nature. Given the revolutionary mentality, it necessarily follows.

In that great book, "Progress and Poverty," Henry George saw it as surely as the Mackays and O'Reillys:

> Whence shall come the new barbarians? Go through the squalid quarters of great cities, and you may see, even now, their gathering hordes!

"Even now." "Now" was, when George wrote those words, the decade which O'Reilly hailed as the one in which "the specters you conjured have risen." George is not now regarded as an upheaver, but only as the proponent of a form of taxation. But in the 1880's, the decade after "Progress and Poverty" was written, he was the embodied aspiration and ideal of the social reformers; in 1886, the Socialists were among his strongest elements of support in his campaign for Mayor of New York, and all the incongruous elements of change were behind him, priests like Father McGlynn, ministers like Dr. Newton, infidels like Colonel Ingersoll, leaders of union labor like John R. O'Donnell, precursors of settlement work like Father Huntington. It was not until 1889 that, through the conservative influence of Thomas G. Shearman, the movement subsided into a fiscal reform under the name (invented by Shearman, who was a lawyer in the Wall Street district) of "the single tax."

The great Karl Marx was as sure as any O'Reilly of them all that the revolution was right at hand. The movements which are collectively styled "the Revolution of 1848" were to him the same harbingers as those of the 1870's were to O'Reilly. Marx, like Miss Symes today, was sure not merely that the revolution was at hand but that it had actually begun and that those were merely its first stages, like the Reveillon riot and the fall of the Bastille in 1789. Toward the end of his life Marx had begun to think it might take a little longer; and in his last days he had grown so pessimistic as to believe that it might be a decade before the Bastille fell, or maybe nearly a generation.

In our own time the great Lenin had the same vision. Never a doubt had Lenin that the triumph of the Bolsheviki over Kerensky and his Girondins in 1917 was merely the first shot in the world-wide revolution; never, as long as he lived. On July 2, 1919, he said, to the Moscow Committee of the Communist party:

> This is the last difficult summer, the last difficult July. If we hold out through it, and we certainly shall, the victory of the world revolution is assured.

He came to see that it might take a little longer, but never did he grow so pessimistic as to think, as Marx did, that it might be almost a generation away.

The same yesterday, today and forever. If any gentleman in this car has a crisis concealed on his person, I call on him to projuce it. But the crisis remains unprojuced. Always it impends.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—Sixteen boxing bouts between members of the New York Catholic Boys' Clubs and the Chicago Catholic Youths' Organization were scheduled to take place before about 50,000 people in Chicago on July 31. The Chicago City Council recognized the occasion as a civic event, and the mayors of the two cities planned to attend. The great interest is a reflection of the increasing force and recognized success of Catholic youth movements in the two cities. * * * In Poznan, Poland, 2,000 representatives of the 350,000 members in a number of Catholic Young Men's Associations met in conference. Among the affiliated associations are religious groups and social, civic and cultural groups. There are library, music and dramatic units; sporting clubs, air clubs and Red Cross sections. During the year the associations have attacked the dwelling problem and completed six model housing projects and started six more. * * * The hold of Garrido Canabal, most violent Mexican in his attitude against Catholics and leader of a personal kind of "radicalism" and a Calles man, has apparently been broken in his home state of Tabasco. The powerful protest which followed the killing in Tabasco of protesting students from Mexico City by Canabal's armed men brought about on July 23 the removal of Governor Manuel Lastra, local lieutenant of Canabal. The position of Rafael Villareal, governor of Tamaulipas, was threatened at the same time. A popular agrarian uprising evidently threatens all the officials associated with Calles. * * * The religious riots which spread over Ireland following the July 12 Orange celebration in Belfast, continued in the face of condemnation by Catholic priests and the Protestant clergy. During the first week of rioting in Belfast nine were killed, hundreds injured and many buildings were burned and broken into. The Protestant Bishop Dr. MacNeece in the North of Ireland led his Church's campaign against the violence and hate. After a week, sinister retaliation began to occur in the Catholic South and the Catholic clergy warned that "those responsible were guilty of a grave sin against charity and justice."

The Nation.—New Deal measures routed in the courts last week, particularly the A.A.A. processing tax and crop control program, had the attention of Congress. The Senate by a vote of 64 to 15 adopted amendments designed to protect the A.A.A. against charges of unconstitutionality. Clarifying language was introduced limiting the agricultural marketing agreements to interstate commerce and specific tax rates were provided to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Senate refused to concur in a provision earlier adopted by the House which would exempt the government from suits to recover processing taxes, when and if the payment of such taxes are finally judged unconstitutional; but it did require that the burden of proof should be on the litigant to show that he had not passed along the tax to the consumer. * * * The House passed by 258 to 88 the bill requested by the administration banning suits against the government for damages growing out of abrogation of gold clauses in contracts. * * * In New Orleans, the Federal Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the constitutional right of the administration's Tennessee Valley Authority to sell electricity in competition with private utilities. * * * Governor Paul M. Pearson of the Virgin Islands and District Judge T. Webber Wilson were both transferred to positions in Washington, and Lieutenant Governor Lawrence W. Cramer of St. Croix was nominated by the President to take Mr. Pearson's place. * * * The Senate Lobby Investigating Committee continued to turn up evidence of the widespread practise by corporation publicity agents of sending hundreds and thousands of telegrams to congressmen signed with the names of persons who had no knowledge of the telegrams being sent. * * * Large strikes were taking place in various parts of the country. In Terre Haute, Indiana, a general strike of forty-eight hours' duration was, after clashes between strikers and the National Guard, finally called off, to let Department of Labor conciliators attempts to arrange a settlement of the grievances. * * * Senator Borah predicted that Congress would still be in session on November 1 and said that Progressives had decided to fasten onto the administration's taxation bill the inflationary Patman Soldiers' Bonus and the Frazier-Lemke Farm Mortgage Refinancing bills. These bills would call for over $5,000,000,000 of paper currency.

The Wide World.—Mussolini's intent concerning Ethiopia was not very clearly defined as the week rolled by. The Council of the League planned to call a meeting for the discussion of this topic, possibly before the end of July. Italy demurred to any conference for which "adequate preparation" had not been made. Emperor Haile Selassie told his followers that resistance would be offered "to the last man." He indicated willingness to compromise and make some territorial concession to Italy. Many observers felt sure that the outcome of the dispute was being awaited eagerly by many Negro tribes in Africa at least some of which are now ruled by men sufficiently educated to follow world events intelligently. * * * Sitting in London, a lackadaisical Royal Commission, empowered to consider the British armament trade but not to weigh evidence concerning it, listened to charges that aircraft manufacturers in England were doing a thriving business with Germany, and that munitions makers had reaped a harvest of gold in Paraguay and Uruguay. An attempt to bring Sir Basil Zaharoff definitely into the picture was blocked by the chairman. * * * On July 16, President Lázaro Cárdenas announced that he planned to create an agrarian reserve army. This

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would mean partial military training for 1,500,000 men. In addition he would greatly strengthen the political power of the army, upon which the National Revolutionary party so greatly relies. * * * The League of Nations was urged by High Commissioner James G. McDonald to assume direct responsibility for 15,000 refugees from Nazi Germany. This number includes most of those who, forced to abandon their homes, have so far been unable to secure assistance. * * * Certain statements by British Admiralty authorities—notably an address to Parliament by Sir Bolton M. Eyres Monsell—indicated that hope had practically been abandoned for fixing new naval ratios by international conference. It was believed that an armament race could be avoided only through "tacit understanding," which might include special agreements between one interested country and another.

* * * *

German Catholics.—Simultaneous with attacks on Jews in Berlin and elsewhere were marked Nazi steps to curtail the freedom of the Catholic body. On July 16, the Ministry of the Interior issued a decree imposing heavy penalties for "propaganda against sterilization." The Vatican had previously protested against the enforced sterilization of Catholic citizens. On July 18, General Hermann Goering issued a declaration in which, while insisting that the government did not wish a *Kulturkampf,* the clergy, the bishops and the Catholic organizations were accused of starting or fostering "political activity" directed against the State. Goering said that pastors were degrading "state institutions and measures openly from the pulpit," that many religious services were political manifestos in disguise, and that "all police and prosecution officials" are now expected "to apply the existing ordinances in their strictest interpretation." At the same time Hans Kerrl, a rabid Nazi formerly connected with the Prussian Ministry of Justice, was appointed Under-Secretary for Church Affairs. Kerrl was to function with the support of both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education. One of the principal issues at stake was the existence of the Catholic youth organizations. These were being suppressed in various parts of Germany, and the attack on the workers' organizations was likewise growing more bitter. Robert Ley, Nazi leader of the *Arbeitsfront,* led the attack, while Dr. Frick, Minister of the Interior, openly championed the cause of Rosenberg. Catholics awaited with deep anxiety the outcome of the Fulda Bishops' Conference, which is scheduled to open soon. No further arrests of priests were reported, though the situation was particularly tense in Baden.

Debates on Money.—On July 18 and 19 the American Institute of Cooperation at Cornell University held a conference of expert economists and business men chiefly to discuss America's currency problems. George F. Warren led the forces of those who believe that index numbers should be the basis for monetary policy, and he was backed particularly by the agriculturists. He stated that the only serious defect of the gold standard is the instability of the value of gold. He said that any country which uses a given weight of gold as a measure of value is bound to have violent price fluctuations which are incompatible with prosperity and democracy. Therefore, he wants a series of index numbers for various commodities to serve as the value basis for money, using gold, at a varying value, only as the backing for money. Dr. O. M. W. Sprague, ex-adviser of the Treasury Department, tried to force home his opinion that the depression is not a monetary problem but rather a problem of production and consumption. He declared that the amount of money or the amount of credit is not a determining factor. The problem, he said, is one of profitable investment, of getting people to want money and credit for use with the prospect of profit. He wants stabilization for the sake of international trade and to develop the confidence of investors in long-term obligations. Revaluation lightens the debt load, gives the government paper profits and puts the banks in a liquid position, but it does not do the fundamental job of creating a demand for credit. James Harvey Rogers, who in general supported Dr. Sprague, emphasized the international aspects of money and credit. Lionel D. Edie urged an immediate linkage of the dollar to the pound after predicting the devaluation of the franc and after predicting that if the present alleged British policy were continued a bitter currency war would follow.

French Decrees.—The deflationary decrees enacted as orders in council by the Laval government at one-thirty on the morning of June 17 have been received almost exclusively with expectancy. They reduced government salaries and pensions of more than 10,000 francs by 10 percent. A 10-percent cut will be made in payments on French government obligations. A surtax of 50 percent was levied on incomes of more than 80,000 francs ($5,306 a year). Securities made out to the bearer will pay 24 percent and arms manufacturers will pay 25 percent. There was a direct attempt to cut the cost of living. Rents of less than 10,000 francs a year and electricity rates are lowered 10 percent, and the price of bread is cut down. The public reception was confused, various groups apparently intending to wait for the convocation of Parliament in October before expressing themselves firmly. A demonstration in Paris on July 19, backed by the Left and particularly the radical civil servants, was kept in bounds by overwhelming government forces and by the temporary arrest of about 1,500 persons. Although Premier Laval says he tried to offend everyone equally in his attempt to "save the franc," he has antagonized the Left much more than the Right, which is most wedded to the gold standard and the idea of a balanced budget and which feels that the government has done its best to conform to the rigid policies advocated by the Bank of France. England's *Catholic Herald* quotes a diagnosis of the Parisian journalist, Lucien Romier: "Two main symptoms show the deep disease of the régime. The first is that it no longer absorbs the new forces which are gathering in the nation, though it yields to them. The second is that the govern-

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ment defends itself by measures which are not in accordance with its nature but give grounds for the criticism and claims of its opponents."

Doing at Williamstown. — A relatively complete schedule of events at the Williamstown Institute of Human Relations, to be conducted this year under the auspices of the National Conference of Jews and Christians, shows that a program of quite extraordinary interest will be assured. Among the more influntial public figures who will be seen on the platform are the Honorable Newton D. Baker, Governor Herbert H. Lehman, and Attorney-General Homer S. Cummings. The roster of college presidents and professors will include Frank Porter Graham, Tyler Dennett, Carlton J. H. Hayes, Paul H. Douglas, Robert McElroy and Arthur Swift. From the journalistic and kindred professions there will come a delegation including Dorothy Canfield Fisher, George Fort Milton, Alexander Woollcott, Father Wilfrid Parsons, and two of the editors of THE COMMONWEAL. Round-table discussions of German, Mexican, Canadian and United States situations will be daily features. The general topic of "Applying the Social Sciences to Intergroup Relations" will be discussed in diverse ways by authoritative speakers. A distinguished group of representative Americans have already signified their resolve to attend. The fee for the Institute itself is only $5, and accommodations in beautiful, cool Williamstown are varied and many. The dates are August 25 to August 30.

Pilgrimage in London.—Members of The Calvert Associates, on a pilgrimage to historic Catholic places abroad, were received at a reception by the Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Reverend Arthur Hinsley, at the Archbishop's House in London. In an address to the pilgrims, Archbishop Hinsley said: "You are pilgrims, but not to us strangers. We are one with you in faith and fellowship. We are one with you in all your efforts to spread abroad the spirit of Catholicity, the spirit of practical tolerance and friendliness among the nationalities and societies of the world today. . . . You are striving not only to banish ill-will and intolerance, but your organization serves to bring into common knowledge and relief facts so often obscured by the prejudices of partizan history." Continuing, Archbishop Hinsley spoke of the value of friendship between the United States and Great Britain. He praised the courage and devotion of English Catholics and wished that they might have an organization for Catholic Action similar to the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Archbishop Hinsley praised American Catholics for their stanch support of Catholic education, their efforts in behalf of social justice and their fight for decency in literature and moving pictures. He concluded by saying that what was much needed was international Catholic Action. On another occasion, the Keys, a society of Catholic men engaged in editorial work, entertained at dinner in London the editor of the *Catholic World* and the editor of THE COMMONWEAL. Archbishop Hinsley was present. Sir Richard Terry was in the chair. Addresses were made by the two American editors and by Mr. Chesterton, Mr. Belloc and Mr. Douglas Woodruff.

* * * *

Since Codes Ceased.—Since the codes on wages, hours of employment and fair trade practises, administered by the NRA, were discontinued by the decision of the Supreme Court, there has been a widespread loss of the gains made in the conditions of labor, according to reports to the Board of Investigation set up by President Roosevelt. Field agents of the skeletonized NRA have been gathering and collating a great deal of information which will be furnished to the President and by him will probably be made public. The decline in labor conditions has not been so much in the large corporations as it has in the smaller ones, many of which are again resorting to sweat-shop practises and the employment of child labor. One of the industries most affected is said to be the boot and shoe industry where there are many small manufacturing companies, a great rivalry between unions and a large "free" labor market. Here wages have declined about 15 percent, hours have been increased about 20 percent, there has been additional unemployment and, because of the price-cutting tendency, jobbers have cancelled large orders while they wait for still lower prices. In the service industries—hotels, restaurants, gasoline stations, etc.—a general return of the twelve-hour day and seven-day week is reported. In the textile and garment industries, the improvement of working conditions achieved under the codes is being lost and piece-work at low rates resorted to, while in retail stores price cutting and the "loss leader" practise are again appearing. The unions are making desperate efforts to preserve labor's gains; indications are that strikes will increase.

Government Housing Difficulties.—A lower court decision that the government could not exercise its right of eminent domain to obtain land for low-cost housing, as the building and sale, or rental, of such housing would not constitute a "public use" of the land, was sustained by a two-to-one decision of the Sixth District United States Court of Appeal. This was a severe blow to slum-clearance plans of the Public Works Administration. The taking of one citizen's property to improve it for the use of another was declared to be outside the scope of the powers delegated to the government; and the fact that work would be done that would aid reemployment was declared irrelevant to the condemnation proceedings which are based on the public use of the property. The dissenting opinion held that the power of eminent domain could be exercised whenever it was necessary for "the general welfare" and described "the elimination on a comprehensive scale of the slum" as a project which would benefit "the health, the moral and the general welfare of the people." Secretary Ickes, while regretting the decision, announced that the P.W.A.'s $249,000,000 low-cost housing program, for which $160,000,000 of work relief funds have been assigned for projects in fifty cities, would still be carried out.

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The Play and Screen

By GRENVILLE VERNON

The Summer Theatres

THERE is both a pathos and a hope in the multiplication of the summer theatres. Twenty years ago the "road" was still flourishing, and there was practically no city of 40,000 people which did not have its local theatre visited at least once a week by a traveling company; today these cities have nothing but the movie houses, and even such metropolises as Boston, Chicago and Philadelphia rarely have more than three plays running at the same time, and usually less than this. Even the old winter stock houses have largely vanished, and as it was in these houses and in the road companies that the young actors and actresses used to learn their job, the newcomers have largely been put into the ranks of the unemployed. Even in New York the number of theatrical openings has greatly been reduced, and though some openings exist here each year, owing to the drain to Hollywood of the more experienced players, when they occur the aspirants are handicapped by having little or no preliminary exprience on the stage. Truly there is a pathos in the flow of young actors and actresses back to the land, to these ill-equipped summer theatres where, poorly paid and often not paid at all, they strive to learn the rudiments of their art in converted barns and outhouses.

In fact, the theatre seems to be re-creating its beginnings, and barnstorming is literally the word which expresses many of these summer efforts. That the new barnstormers differ profoundly in character from those of the early years is no doubt profoundly true, for they are nearly all young, and many of them are highly educated. Yet to learn their profession they are forced to undergo the same trials which twenty years ago the theatre proudly asserted were no longer the portion of its children.

Some of these summer theatres, the ones visited by guest stars from Broadway and possessing experienced directors, give within their limitations excellent performances, but the great majority have to rely upon untried talent. What happens to a new play in such theatres is often lamentable, for neither acting, direction nor the time given to rehearsals is adequate. And in acting inexperience must learn from inexperience. This is the supreme pathos of the summer theatre. And yet the hope is there too. Idealism these young players have and courage. Shut out of normal means to learn their art, they prove that the love for the drama is not dead. Hundreds, probably thousands, of these young men and women are now appearing in these red-mills and red-barns and schoolhouses, and giving their best. Sometimes it is for $40 a week, sometimes for $20, sometimes merely for board and lodging, but always it is for love of the theatre and with the determination that the theatre shall not die.

The theatre owes a deep debt of gratitude to these young men and women, and even Hollywood will do well to follow their efforts with a sympathetic eye. There is today nowhere else where a young player can learn his business, and Hollywood itself needs players who know their business. It is notorious that the movies cannot train their own actors. Stage experience is becoming more and more necessary to anyone seeking a Hollywood contract, and yet that experience Hollywood, by destroying the road and the stock company, has made it more and more difficult to obtain. With all their limitations it is in these summer theatres that the Hollywood stars of tomorrow are undoubtedly appearing at the present moment.

A visit to most of them will reveal at least one or two players in each company who need only further training and opportunity to make good, and occasionally the whole troupe will bear watching. What is most vital in the American theatre today began in organizations of untried performers, such as the Provincetown Playhouse, the Washington Square Players, and later the Group Theatre. The two first organizations are no more, but one or more of the summer theatres may very well in the near future take their place.

Ginger

THERE are those who have hailed Jane Withers as a second Shirley Temple, but whatever she is she is certainly not that. It is indeed wrong for her well-wishers to couple her name with that of little Miss Temple, because by doing so they rob her of what is most excellent in her own right. Jane Withers is essentially a comedienne and a mimic, and as such can very well stand on her own fet. Indeed in parts requiring the shrewdness of the street urchin she is unapproachable, and her powers of mimicry are extraordinary. Her latest vehicle, "Ginger," has been well chosen to display her at her best.

Arthur Kober's play is naif and utterly unoriginal, the old story of the street waif befriended by an old actor and later adopted by a rich couple, but it gives Miss Withers the opportunity of running the gamut of her *gaminerie*. Whether in attempting to eat her squab, or sliding down the banisters, or into the coal-chute, whether cuddling into the arms of the old actor or giving her opinion of the pretensions of her new mother, she is altogether delightful. That she speaks a strange sort of language which goes for English only makes her comic quality the more amusing, a quality far removed from the bright electric charm of Shirley Temple. But little Jane will bear watching. She is a personality.

She is in "Ginger" admirably supported by O. P. Heggie as the old actor, by Jackie Searl as Hamilton, and by Walter King as Daniel Parker. Indeed Jackie Searl as the slightly older child runs Miss Withers a close second. He too is a personality. If little Miss Withers could iron out her Midwestern "r's," she ought to make an extraordinarily telling Dickens child; perhaps even now her powers of mimicry might permit her to attempt one of the many child figures of the great novelist which have not yet been presented on the screen.

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Communications

A LITERARY CENTER

Whittier, Calif.

TO the Editor: A few weeks ago THE COMMONWEAL called the attention of its readers to two new Catholic literary centers in New York City. For the past few years we have welcomed such news items as a mark of the growth of Catholic Action throughout the land, and now we are proud to say that here on our Western Coast a similar movement is on foot. Here in the city of Los Angeles, Sarah I. Metcalf and her sister Julia T. Metcalf have opened a library in a remodeled room of their home, at 1829 South Gramercy Place, which appropriately enough means in Old English, God's Mercy Street.

For over a year this home has been used as a meeting place for Catholics interested in the study of the liturgical apostolate and scholastic philosophy. Semi-monthly since May, 1934, a group has assembled for an interpretive study of the liturgy in the spirit of Pius X's "Motu Proprio" and Pius XI's "Cultus Divini" and the contributions of Guéranger, Vonier, Marmion, etc. In July of the same year weekly classes were instituted for the study of formal and material logic and discussions in ethics and metaphysics. Mr. Everett R. Harman, who was one of the founders of the Liturgical Arts Society of New York and who has observed personally both American and European expressions of the movement "to restore all things in Christ," has given these lectures and conducted the discussions.

On March 19, 1935, the library was formally opened under the patronage of the newly canonized saint and scholar, Thomas More. The 1,400 volumes now on its shelves have been accurately classified according to the Dewey Decimal system and all common usages of modern library practise have been observed as strictly as possible.

The library-room has a separate outside entrance and a glowing lamp set in the window is an invitation for all to enter by this door. Here those attending the lectures assemble first by common consent, and as the hostesses move from table to shelf receiving returned books and recommending new ones, a lively discussion of Catholic subjects ensues, including Gregorian music, Father Coughlin's latest talk, the Catholic Radio Hour address, Bert Lytell's "First Legion," the asceticism of Charles Foucauld, the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, the influence of women in the Middle Ages as exemplified by Saint Catherine of Siena and Matilda of Tuscany, the meaning of prime matter, the sorrows of Mexico—veritably a cross-section of Catholic thought and culture. In such an atmosphere one feels a closer kinship to all the fields of Catholic learning, for all he need do is reach forth his hand and draw from the surrounding shelves volumes on history, sociology, economics, biography, philosophy, ethics, poetry, travel, art or fiction. In addition to this intellectual satisfaction, the hospitable welcome given to all who enter this home, the all-pervading sense of Catholic peace and Catholic living and the glowing ardor of the lecturer serve to invest this undertaking with an intimate charm which prevents its being just another library.

The library has been organized in accordance with the usual regulations governing rental libraries, though remaining strictly non-profit. All fees are applied to the purchase of new publications. It is open two evenings of the week as well as during the afternoons of the remaining four days.

It is confidently hoped by the steadily increasing circle of friends of this enterprise that from its present modest beginnings the Thomas More Lending Library will expand and develop and contribute in some measure to that now detectable foment which is awakening in this land, a modern Catholic Renaissance.

BRENTON MCCORMACK.

THE NEGRO APOSTOLATE

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: In his recent article in THE COMMONWEAL dealing with the Negro question, and the problem of making our American Catholics "colored conscious," Father John LaFarge made one point that should be stressed in every Catholic activity. It was that as Catholics we must extend to our brethren, no matter of what race or color or condition of life, something more than mere "social justice." There must be some heart in what we do, not just the cold, abstract, blind fulfilment of the requirements of justice. If justice without merciful love were meted out to us, we could only say: "Lord, who shall stand it?" Justice should be presupposed among Christians. Of course, we know that the Negro is frequently denied that measure of justice which is his due. He is treated unjustly in many places and on many matters. This injustice must be overcome. But it will never be overcome by pleading merely for justice. Until Christians are awakened to the ideal of universal brotherhood in Christ; until they proceed to place as a basis of action the principle that in Christ there is neither bond nor free, Jew or Greek, they will not give even what justice demands.

The Negro workingman is content if he gets work and receives his pay. The Negro youth, who is advancing daily in education, civil recognition, athletic prowess and other ways, does not and cannot accept a place of inferiority, whether applied by law or by custom. Like other rising peoples, he is apt to overstretch his demands, hoping that some measure short of them will be conceded.

With Catholics, zealous for the conversion of the race, the question is not of statistics about what we are doing for them, or of the agencies at work in the mission field, nor yet of the degree of progress; it is a question of a state of mind: do we look upon the Negro as real or potential Catholic? Will we let him in, or will we only permit him to stand in the vestibule? Will he, other conditions being equal, be admitted to full brotherhood in Christ? We must answer "Yes"; otherwise, we limit the fruits of Christ's Redemption.

REV. FRANCIS A. WALSH, O. S. B.

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Books

A Valuable First Novel

Out of the Whirlwind, by William Thomas Walsh. New York: Robert H. McBride and Company. $2.50.

IN THIS novel of American life Mr. Walsh has made fine use of the Polish-Lithuanian element. Taking his characters almost entirely from these people whose Catholic faith and tradition are interwoven into the pattern of their lives, the author has given us a genuine Catholic novel, and a good one. It is built on the strong framework of a good plot; the incidents work out logically and naturally; the characters are authentic—at all times creatures of flesh and blood, or, truer still, of body and soul. The play of personality on personality is as absorbing as is the consequent working out of the plot.

The novel takes its title from the words of the Book of Job: "Then the Lord answered Job out of a whirlwind. . . ." Out of the whirlwind of his life begun among the roses of his mother's farm in Poland, continued through a youth in the immigrant section of a New England factory town among his Lithuanian father's countrymen, swirled through a cyclone of love and lust, an accusation of murder, a death sentence later commuted to life imprisonment, a release after twelve years of the horrors of prison life mitigated though they were by study and reading, and toward the end an awakened spirituality—out of this whirlwind to the peace and beauty of a genuinely Catholic life came Stephen Wieskievicz, the Steve West of his little community. Out of a whirlwind more sin-darkened than Stephen's came too, though by a somewhat different route, his sweetheart, Nina Mateskas.

Mr. Walsh exhibits a sort of confessional knowledge of human nature, a priestly knowledge, so to speak; and with it a priestly compassion for his characters. These figures cover a wide canvas but they are all uncommonly well drawn. Nina, the cold, hard, passionate, selfish beauty, is perhaps the best done, though Stephen stands out in his own better colors. Luisa Koben, the girl who had never laughed aloud until she was fifteen, and then learned it "laboriously by imitating the chuckle of Sister Benignus," and Sister Benignus herself are convincingly sketched; and so too are Kaplan, the millionaire Jewish philanthropist, and Father Burke, the prison chaplain, Scanlan, the scoundrel lawyer, and Casimir, the amorous saloon keeper whose death seemed so necessary to the lovers' happiness.

The evident sincerity of the writer is an admirable balance to any tendency toward the melodrama which the plot might suggest. His treatment of the religious element throughout the story is exquisite. The reader lives for the time being in what Mr. Chesterton has called a "Catholic cosmos"; and if this Catholic cosmos is inhabited by sinners as well as saints, these sinners are always well aware of it when they are sinning. They know, too, how to find the door to righteous living. "Out of the Whirlwind" is convincingly built about the Catholic philosophy of suffering.

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The book might have gained by compression. To lovers of Mr. Walsh's historical study, "Isabella of Spain," this, his first novel, gives promise of more fiction as well as more history. "Out of the Whirlwind" enjoyed the distinction of being the May selection of the Catholic Book Club.

CHARLOTTE M. MEAGHER.

Prison Reform

There Is No Truce, by Rudolph W. Chamberlain. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

THERE is, indeed, no truce in the life of Thomas Mott Osborne, the famous former warden of Sing Sing Prison, as presented in this full-size biography. The principal epochs of his active life—youth, political, civic, and prison career—pass in review. Osborne's youth, although uneventful, clearly shows his incipient sensitiveness, romanticism and intellectual realism. As a Unitarian, he was a firm believer in the inherent goodness of man and in a human nature unspoiled by sinful inheritance. The causes of evil were, as he understood them, bad environment and undesirable association. With absolute confidence in his own reasoning and experience his judgments early took the form of infallible dogmas. Humility he did not know nor practise, but vanity showed itself abundantly.

During his political career, Osborne showed himself at his best as mayor of Auburn and, unlike many other politicians, he tried to promote the welfare of the citizens with utter disregard of his own. His reward was that of all men who oppose party systems and political bosses: persecution until the end. It is a sordid story.

The second part of the book, which is also the most interesting, describes the activities of the prison reformer and as such he will be long remembered. His experiences as "Tom Brown" in Auburn and as a voluntary convict in the Portsmouth Naval Prison furnished him with first-hand information about prevailing conditions. Putting it mildly, they were simply horrible. True to his belief in man's natural righteousness, he introduced his own system based on self-discipline and self-government. This Mutual Welfare League, founded in Auburn, afterward extended to Sing Sing and Portsmouth. His ideas were revolutionary at that time, but he was undoubtedly successful. Where there is success, there is envy. The greatest men maintain their rank by suffering. Osborne decided to keep what he had achieved by fighting all adversaries and, among them, the corrupt politicians. He conquered, it is true, but in defeat. He died in the street at Auburn whilst impersonating a tramp.

However, in his prison reforms, he was not without sympathizers; in fact, he had to struggle against forces that were inclined to coddle the convicts. Many of his principles and methods were subsequently adopted in this country and abroad. A more human treatment of prisoners to which he pointed the way was the result.

The biography is well and sympathetically written and gives a good general view of Osborne's peculiar character.

KILIAN J. HENNRICH.

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Under the Wilson Flag

Road to War—America, 1914-1917, by Walter Millis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.00.

THIS Millis book is one to be welcomed. I look on it as I do on his "Martial Spirit" dealing with the Spanish War; as I do on Mark Sullivan's collations and Claude Bowers's retrospects. All have high value for future historians, who will understand and evaluate, as well as transcribe. For the history of the United States is only in preparation. It has not yet been written. Nor will it be written till we consent to look upon ourselves rather than on the statesmen, politicians, bankers, editors, preachers, business men, of any given time. I would offer, not in disagreement, but as a suggestion to Mr. Millis's readers, that the clue to the emotion which "swept a great peace-loving democracy into the most terrible war of all time" does not lie in "the ideas, prejudices, ambitions and hidden motives" of these personages. Some of them, in the period Mr. Millis describes, were altogether noble; some eminently respectable, if inexperienced and impractical; others, of course, were occupied in feeding the vanities of this great jelly-fish called "a peace-loving democracy" for their personal success and, maybe, personal profit.

I suggest a thought which has grown on me steadily (an unorthodox thought—a heretical thought), ever since, just short of forty years ago, I was sent out to our international frontiers to represent American interests in diplomacy, and was thereby obliged to study our own people critically, in order to solve the puzzle which grieved my youthful candid soul: why foreigners look upon us as they do. It has grown upon me that we are not a great peace-loving democracy by any manner of means, but an inchoate, amorphous will. We give that impression in the Pacific, in Central and South America, in the Caribbean; everywhere I have seen service as an initimate observer or in some intense activity. In all those regions, which are our only danger spots, we give the impression of wanting our own way, regardless of others, and of being gloriously confident of being able to impose our ways and our will, whether we be ready for war or not. No foreigner quite knows how to handle that phenomenon. Nobody knows on whose toes this dead-weight of ours will fall, if he tries to handle it. That is, in a way, a great help to diplomacy. It makes people cautious of us. It is at the same time a great hindrance to accomplishment, for it is impossible to rely on any proposal, on any pledge, made by any American statesman. The bulk may fall on his as easily as on a foreigner.

All this is contained in Mr. Millis's book by deduction. Men do not deduce easily, however, unpalatable things about themselves. Some day it has got to be said plainly and objectively.

"Gnothi Seauton" still holds good in history; but I do not subscribe to the publisher's blurb, "Read it and blush." There was nothing to blush about in our idealism, nor in our historical ignorance.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

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Briefer Mention

Social Work Yearbook, 1935. Fred S. Hall, Editor. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. $4.00.

THIS is the third biennial issue of this important handbook. It is practically a new book. The agencies listed have increased in number from 836 to 990. The grouping of topical articles is a little different from that in former issues and a new section for private state agencies has been added to the directory. Former topical articles appear rewritten and brought up to date and a large number of new ones have been added, among which Catholic movements and agencies are more adequately and correctly considered. There is much material assembled in this book that is difficult to locate and it deserves a hearty reception by all who are interested in any field of social work.

Science, A New Outline, by J. W. N. Sullivan. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons. $2.00

THE SIMPLICITY and clarity of this book make it easy reading for the person with only an average knowledge of physics, chemistry and mathematics. The principal modern theories and discoveries with regard to our sensible universe are treated competently, according to the endorsements of eminent specialists. It is all unfailingly interesting and the book can be commended for not straying from its special field into semi-theological speculations. Einstein's theory of relativity is made about as intelligible as it could be for the layman, and the marvels in the midst of which we live, from molecules to the outer reaches of space, are described. The book is illustrated.

Homemaker's Handbook, by Dorothy Myerson. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. $2.75.

IF YOU are thinking of a book for the bride, this one may prove of stable usefulness. It is at once a cook-book, a digest of dietetics, a résumé of domestic etiquette and a guide to efficient ways of doing chores. There is even a short bibliography. The volume is more than 550 pages long.

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